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Filed : January 10, 2002

REMARKS

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, Claims 23-34, 36-42 and 55-59 remain pending, Claims 23 and 55 having been amended, and Claims 1-22, 35, and 43-54 having been canceled.

Claims 23, 24, 36, 39, 41, 55-57 and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohshita et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,873,428). Claims 33, 34, 37, 38, 40 and 48 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable in view of Ohshita et al. Claim 30 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Taig (U.S. Pat. No. 5,328,002). Claims 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Taig and Bedenbender (U.S. Patent No. 3,929,206). Claim 42 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Heible (U.S. Pat. No. 5,894,903). Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as amended herein, overcome the Examiner's rejections and place the claims in condition for allowance.

Rejection of the Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 23, 24, 36, 39, 41, 55-57 and 59 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Ohshita et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,873,428).

Ohshita discloses "a cover plate 66 [sic] affixed across the cavity 61 and [sic] a peripheral seal 67." See col. 4, lines 38-41. As Ohshita illustrates in Figure 6, the cover plate 66 is disposed at the open end of the hub portion 41. The seal 67 is also disposed at the open end of the hub 41.

Ohshita does not disclose or suggest a cover disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub, nor a sealing arrangement disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub.

Applicant has amended Claim 23 to recite, among other things, a "cover disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub" and "a sealing arrangement disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub."

Applicants thus submit that amended Claim 23 defines over Ohshita. Claims 24, 30-34, and 36-42 depend from Claim 23. Applicants thus submit that Claims 24, 30-34, and 36-42 also define over Ohshita, not only because they depend from independent Claim 23, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art.

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Likewise, Applicant has amended Claim 55 to recite, among other things, a "cover disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub" and "a sealing arrangement disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub."

Applicants thus submit that amended Claim 55 defines over Ohshita. Claims 56-59 depend from Claim 55. Applicants thus submit that Claims 56-59 also define over Ohshita, not only because they depend from independent Claim 55, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Rejection of the Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 33, 34, 37, 38, 40 and 48 stand rejected as unpatentable over Ohshita et al.

As discussed above, Ohshita discloses a cover and seal disposed at the open end of the hub. See col. 4, lines 38-41; Figure 6.

However, Ohshita does not teach or suggest, alone or in combination, a cover disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub, nor a sealing arrangement disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub.

As noted above, Claim 23 now recites, among other recitations, a "cover disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub" and "a sealing arrangement disposed in the recess near the closed end of the hub."

Applicants thus submit that Claims 33, 34, 37, 38, and 40 are also patentable over Ohshita, not only because they depend from Claim 23, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art. Claim 48 has been canceled.

Claim 30 stands rejected as unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Taig. As discussed above, amended Claim 23 is patentable over Ohshita, alone or in combination with other references. Claim 30 depends from Claim 23. Applicants thus submit that Claim 30 is patentable over Ohshita in view of Taig not only because it depends from Claim 23, but also because it recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Claims 31-32 stand rejected as unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Taig and Bedenbender. As discussed above, Claim 23 is patentable over Ohshita, alone or in combination with other references. Claims 31 and 32 depend from Claim 23. Applicants thus submit that Claims 31-32 are patentable over Ohshita in view of Taig and Bedenbender, not only because

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they depend from Claim 23, but also because each of these claims recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Claim 42 stands rejected as unpatentable over Ohshita in view of Heible. As discussed above, Claim 23 is patentable over Ohshita, alone or in combination with other references. Claim 42 depends from Claim 23. Applicants submit that Claim 42 is patentable over Ohshita in view of Heible, not only because it depends from Claim 23, but also because it recites a unique combination of features not taught or suggested by the prior art.

Applicants believe that independent Claim 23, amended above, is generic to Claims 25-30, which depend from Claim 23. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that Claims 25-30 be considered as being dependent from a generic independent claim.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims, and that the claim amendments provided herein place the pending claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicant's attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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